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REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner associate this application with Attorney Ref. COX-1.

Claims 1-15 are pending in the application. Applicants hereby reaffirm the election of Group I, Invention I, Claims 1-6 drawn to a decorative carapace. Claims 7-15 consequently stand withdrawn.

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being anticipated by Pazar (U.S. Publication 2003/0167706). Applicants have amended claim 1 to include aspects of claims 2 and 5, now canceled, and respectfully traverse the rejection.

Amended Claim 1 recites a decorative carapace for a burial vault including, among other things, a substrate is formed from a material selected from the group of polyester, polypropylene, polyethylene, vinyl, acetate, acrylic, polystyrene, or polycarbonate which is adhered to a carapace using adhesive.

Pazar fails to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in amended Claim 1. Notably, Pazar fails to disclose or suggest a substrate formed from the recited material. Instead, Pazar teaches using a metal nameplate 2310. Further, Pazar fails to disclose or suggest a substrate adhered to a carapace. In fact, the 103 rejection of claims 1-6 already contains an acknowledgment that Pazar fails to teach the use of adhesive. Pazar explicitly teaches forming screw holes 2830 in the carapace for affixing the nameplate with screws. See paragraphs [0087] through [0089].

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-2 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

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Claims 1-6 strand rejected as being unpatentable over Pazar in view of Takemoto (U.S. 4,219,596). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection as applied to claims 1, 3, 4, and 6.

As acknowledged by the Examiner, Pazar fails to disclose or suggest a substrate attached to a carapace using adhesive.

Takemoto teaches labels which are so thin that application of a label requires both a carrier web 26 and a release surface 28. The release surface 28 is removed to expose an adhesive surface.

One of the main concerns disclosed in Pazar is the longevity of identifying information. For this reason Pazar uses a metal nameplate with is sturdily attached to the concrete carapace with screws or bolts.

Applicants respectfully assert that it would not have been obvious to combine the teachings of Takemoto with those of Pazar absent some external motivation. In this case, the rejection impermissibly relies on Applicants' application to provide the necessary motivation. On its face, the Pazar reference teaches the use of Screws to attach a Metal nameplate to carapace. It would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have disregarded Pazar's explicit teachings in the manner proposed by the Examiner.

The Examiner has failed to demonstrate a *prima facie* case of obviousness because none of the references provide the necessary motivation to combine. In fact, the combination appears to be contrary to the explicit teachings of Pazar.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-6 as applied to as applied to claims 1, 3, 4, and 6 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

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The Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of this case.

Should any questions arise regarding this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully Submitted,


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